

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

---

## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: APRIL 15, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 2 – ITEMS FOR CONSENT

---

**ISSUE:** Staff update to Transportation Commission on various ongoing projects.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive the items for consent.

**A. FUNDING UPDATE**

The Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) continues to hold meetings to discuss the proposed FY 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets, which were proposed in December 2014, and since modified. After receiving negative feedback regarding service cuts and fare increases, WMATA staff developed a proposal in which jurisdictional subsidies were brought down \$35.5 million from the General Manager's original proposal, without employing service cuts or fare increases. Thus there are no WMATA service cuts proposed for Alexandria. A public hearing was held at WMATA's offices on April 7, 2015. This hearing was held to gather testimony for the following items: the pricing of a few Metrorail station parking lots is proposed to be changed, the TransitLink card (employed by some people coming from commuter rail roads) is proposed to be eliminated, and the proposed Capital Improvement Plan is being reviewed.

WMATA continues to hold discussions with regional funding partners to determine the language and funding amount which should be contained within a regional Comprehensive Funding Agreement (CFA). Jurisdictional staff is awaiting more information from WMATA. The Secretaries of Transportation of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia have agreed to fund the purchase of 220 rail cars for WMATA. The use of these cars (expansion, replacement, or some combination of both) has not been determined as of yet.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) has developed an initial set of FY 2015 and FY 2016 recommendations for funding 70% projects which are regionally significant. Two of Alexandria's projects, the Potomac Yard Metrorail station and the West End Transitway received the second and third highest ratings of all NVTA 70% projects during this set of evaluations. Implementing Transit Signal Priority (TSP) on Duke Street was also recommended for funding. Alexandria projects

generally received favorable reviews from those who provided testimony. The final disposition for the FY2015 and FY2016 plan will be provided at the April 23, 2015 NVTa meeting.

VDOT staff continued developing proposals for a rating system for major projects funded by Commonwealth funds as prescribed by HB2.

VDOT and DRPT have evaluated the proposals for grant funding for FY2016. They are finishing their proposal to develop a draft Six-Year Program, which will be approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on April 15<sup>th</sup>. The CTB will hold its Northern Virginia public hearing on the program at the VDOT Northern Virginia offices on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **B. POTOMAC YARD METORAIL STATION EIS**

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is available for review and public comment through May 18, 2015. Three Community Open Houses were held in late March/early April (March 31, April 8, April 13) to provide a venue for members of the public to learn about the results of the DEIS analysis. Staff anticipates releasing a staff recommendation for the preferred alternative in late April, with a decision by City Council following closure of the comment period on May 18. During this period boards and commissions will be asked to comment on the elements of the recommendation within their purview, and a public hearing will be held on May 16. The Transportation Commission will review the staff recommendation at a special meeting on May 11.

**Background:** The Potomac Yard Metrorail Station project is an infill Metrorail station located between the National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail stations on the Blue and Yellow lines in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

For more information on the project, please visit [www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard](http://www.alexandriava.gov/potomacyard).

#### **C. METROWAY (ROUTE 1)**

Installation of real-time bus arrival signs at the seven stations within the Route 1 Transitway was completed in March. Ridership continues to hold steady, and is expected to grow with the opening of new multi-family buildings in Potomac Yard and the completion of Arlington's portion of the Crystal City Potomac Yard Transitway.

Phase 2 of the Transitway is scheduled to open in the spring of 2015 when the dedicated lanes from the Arlington County line to the Crystal City Metrorail Station are complete.

**Background:** During the first round of TIGER grants, the City received \$8.5 million to design and construct the Route 1 Transitway between Monroe Avenue and East Glebe Road. The City compiled additional grant funding and \$5.2 million in local funding to design/construct various elements of the Transitway project. The total cost of the Transitway including vehicles is approximately \$20 million.

For more information on the Route 1 Transitway project please see visit:

#### **D. TRANSIT STORE**

**The current location of the Alexandria Transit Store by the King Street Metro will be closing on June 19, 2015. In place of a traditional “brick and mortar” facility, staff is creating a mobile cart that would be more nimble in service delivery and reach a wider audience while continuing to serve as a high-quality multi-modal transportation resource. Customers will be able to purchase bus passes, add money to your SmarTrip card, sign up for Guaranteed Ride Home, and get commuting advice. The mobile store will have a fixed schedule each month and will be present at Alexandria special events throughout the year. Schedules and updates will be available at [www.alexandriava.gov/LocalMotion](http://www.alexandriava.gov/LocalMotion).**

**Background:** The Alexandria Transit Store (ATS) is the face of Alexandria’s Local Motion program, which promotes and supports transportation options including transit, walking, biking, carpooling, and other transportation options to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and make Alexandria more livable for residents and more attractive for business. The ATS has been in operation since 2003 and is funded entirely with CMAQ/RSTP grant funds. The ATS is located on Diagonal Road across from the King Street Metrorail Station and operates from 7:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday. DASH has been staffing the ATS since 2003, managing the day-to-day operations of the store in partnership with Local Motion and the Department of T&ES.

Staff is evaluating additional mobile resources including a more permanent vehicle or mobile unit. At that time, the cart will be used in conjunction with the vehicle or can travel separately if Local Motion services are needed at two locations concurrently.

#### **E. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**The vision, goals and objectives, existing conditions and progress report have been completed for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and were presented at the February 4, 2015 Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting. The bicycle network is in the process of being developed, and the proposed draft network for the west side of Alexandria will be presented at the next Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting. The project consultant is also in the process of conducting field work for the development of recommendations within the pedestrian focus areas. The next Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting will be held on April 16, 2015 at William Ramsey Center at 6:30 p.m.**

**Background:** The City is conducting an update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, and development of the Complete Streets Design Guidelines, which will be completed in late 2015. The City completed both the Transportation Master Plan, and a Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan in 2008 which is data rich and serves as an implementation tool for the Transportation Master Plan. Since that time, staff has completed many important projects to improve walking and bicycling in the City, and many more are currently underway. In 2011, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy which expanded staff to include a full time Complete Streets Coordinator, and initiated a Capital Bikeshare Program (Bikeshare Program), both of which continue to expand citywide. Given the many pedestrian and bicycle projects and initiatives completed over the past five years, including the Bikeshare Program, as well as the adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the City will undertake an effort to

incorporate these additions into an updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines.

The purpose of this update to the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and development of a Complete Streets Design Guidelines will be to:

- Develop a non-motorized system that addresses the needs of all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit riders) and is consistent with the Transportation Master Plan that encourages transportation options, reducing dependence on the private automobile;
- Develop both a bicycle and pedestrian network and hierarchy, based on identification of major activity centers or destinations (including existing and projected development and Metrorail and fixed transit stations); and
- Develop a framework for implementing non-motorized policies and projects citywide

More information is available at: [www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan](http://www.alexandriava.gov/pedbikeplan)

#### **F.FY 2016-2025 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**Staff presented the City Manager's proposed FY 2016-2025 budget to the Transportation Commission at its March 18, 2015 meeting. The transportation budget focused on maintenance of infrastructure and existing services and defers and reduces some capital projects in order to reach target funding, due to lower projected revenues and requests from WMATA for additional funding. At the March 18 meeting, the Commission held a public hearing, and recommended that Council consider a number of changes to the transportation budget, including funding operating costs for Capital Bikeshare expansion, and noted the importance of increasing capital and operating costs for DASH expansion, and placed a higher priority on the Old Cameron Run trail, over the Backlick Run trail. These recommendations and others were formalized in a letter to Council. The Council held a work session on March 23, 2015, and held a public hearing on April 9, 2015. The Council is anticipated to adopt the final budget on May 7, 2015.**

**Background:** Each year the City Manager presents a proposed City Budget to the City Council for consideration and action. As part of the budget process, a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is developed, programming funding for major capital projects in the City. Funding for the CIP comes from the City's general fund, grants and other non-City sources of funding including developer contributions.